

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Farr: On-Site Generators Needed at Service Stations to Ensure Gasoline Availability in Disasters



The state should require service stations on major highways to install on-site generators to ensure gasoline is available to motorists if a natural disaster or terrorist attack results in power outages that shut down gas pumps for days or even weeks at a time, state Representative Bob Farr, R-19th District, said today.

“The need for uninterrupted supplies of gasoline in the event of a disaster or terrorist attack was graphically demonstrated in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when evacuations from New Orleans and other cities along the Gulf Coast were disrupted because massive power outages shut down gasoline pumps and made it impossible for motorists fleeing the devastation to fill their tanks,” Representative Farr said.

“People lost their lives needlessly because they ran out of gas and had to abandon their vehicles on major state highways. The abandoned vehicles slowed or blocked traffic, making an orderly evacuation all but impossible. If gasoline stations along those highways had been equipped with generators, it would have ensured an uninterrupted supply of power to their pumps and would have significantly reduced the risk to residents trying to leave the disaster areas,” said Representative Farr, who raised the issue in a recent letter to state Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Commissioner James M. Thomas.

“In watching the evacuations in Louisiana as a result of the hurricane, the one thing that was clear is how difficult it is for people to drive if there aren’t any open gas stations. That problem becomes quite acute when there are widespread power outages,” Representative Farr wrote.

The problem could be replicated in Connecticut if a severe ice storm, hurricane or terrorist attack resulted in a massive power outage and people could not find service stations whose pumps were operating, Representative Farr said.

“It seems to me a rational homeland security policy would be to require all large gas stations on our highways to have built-in generators. If there was a power outage they could generate their own power to operate their pumps and continue to sell gasoline,” Representative Farr wrote.

Representative Farr recommended that Thomas’ office review the proposal and determine if it should be implemented by an act of the General Assembly or through new state regulations.